

The following is the unabridged version of provided verbal testimony which was edited for the required three-minute limitation.

Honorable representatives,

My name is Dominick Agron. I am a resident of Easton and a father of two - ages 5 and 4. Thank you for permitting me the opportunity to express my concerns with Senate Bills 897, 1071, and 1076 as well as House Bill 6595. In the interest of time, I will not address my concerns with Bills 505, 506, 710, 6251, and 6598.

Let me outline my concern in a few key points:

- Bill 595 prohibits the discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of a private residence. As written, this deters someone from coming to the aid of a neighbor in an emergency for fear that they will be charged as a criminal, and prevents someone whose abode is close to another from defending themselves in their own home. Instead, I would propose that private residents be required to file a form with the State attesting that they do NOT give permission for someone to discharge a firearm within 500 feet of their residence. That places the onus on the homeowner that does not want the neighbor to come to their aid, rather than on a Good Samaritan. This notification should also be publically available so there is no confusion as to who does not want a firearm discharged near their home.
- Bill 1071 creates a tax on the sale of each firearm to pay for a Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund. I lost my mother when I was a child and countless friends and family since. Bad things happen and many times to good people. But, I ask our legislature body why honest potential gun owners are to be assessed a 'Sin' tax to pay for the evil deeds of a criminal? Owning a gun is a constitutional right and should not be on the same field as a New York City Big Gulp, cigarettes, or alcohol. I know the State of Connecticut is faced with financial difficulties through the current administration's mismanagement, but this will do nothing but create a moral hazard problem. I would suggest that you use a portion of the proceeds from gun fines and/or seize of the assets from convicted felons. They caused the crime, they should pay, not the honest citizen.
- Bill 1076 starts by attempting to broaden the definition of an assault weapon, but does so in an arbitrary cosmetic way. To illustrate my point, both Firearm A and Firearm B in your attachment and illustrated here are basically the same exact gun. They both fire the same ammunition, hold the same number of bullets, fire one shot at a time, fire ammunition at the same distances and velocity, and have the same barrel size. The only difference is that Firearm A is made of wood and Firearm B is made of plastic to look like a military rifle. Yet, Firearm A would not be an assault weapon and B could simply because it looks like a military weapon and has plastic grip. We tried this once before during the Clinton administration and as you know, the data was totally inconclusive as to whether banning assault weapons made the slightest dent in reducing gun violence. We should take our learnings and not repeat the mistakes of history.

- Bill 1076 also creates a gun registry of every legal gun owner in the state but there are issues. In particular,
 1. The registry will contain personal information not necessary in protecting the public such as the occupation, age, and place of employment
 2. This information has not been afforded protection under the Freedom of Information Act. This means that the information could be obtained by the public
 3. The section calls for a registration fee. In the event that these fees become excessive or someone that currently owns a gun falls on hard times, the government can confiscate the firearm. Imagine the number of guns that can be legally confiscated by simply raising the registration fee to \$100,000 per firearm
 4. The registry serves as a database for mass confiscation similar to how Cuba, China, and Germany disarmed its citizens preceding WWII and how New York City used the information in the 1970's to enforce its ban
 5. There are no checks and balances instilled into the registry process. If the presiding clerk does not like the applicant or the rights afforded under the Second Amendment, and denies the registration application, the ONLY recourse the applicant has is to appeal to the State Superior Court. I am sure there are better uses of the Superior Court's time and resources.
 6. A gun registry serves no function other than to penalize the legal gun owner and discourage someone from owning a gun, creating a web of complexity that will cause honest law abiding citizens to be inadvertently branded as criminals and causing their Firearms to be confiscated; as well as further socially stigmatizing and stereotyping someone who exercises their rights under the second amendment. The registry will not affect criminals as a criminal will **NOT** register their gun prior to committing a crime. Let me remind you and everyone standing by me here today, that a criminal by the very definition does **NOT** obey the law.
- Bill 1076 also outlaws any bullet proof vests. I struggle to see how that will reduce violence. While I don't own a bullet proof vest, nor have any intention of doing so, I don't see how one person's desire to be protected against someone shooting them should be outlawed. If it's this legislature's concern that a criminal would wear a bullet proof vest in committing another crime, let's do a reality check. A law of this nature on the books will not do a single thing to deter someone from committing the underlying crime.
- Bill 1076 also creates a gun offender registry and makes available anyone that is convicted of a gun crime on the same level as a sex offender. With the proposed upgrades in the class of crimes being proposed as part of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety's Democratic Consensus Proposal, this would scope in almost everyone that

commits a gun crime, even those that unintentionally created an infraction by the web of new legislation. Imagine the pain your children will go through if your name is floated on a list equivalent to a sex offender simply because you forgot to submit your gun tax payment causing you to be a criminal and therefore deemed to illegally own your gun. I ask- what benefit to society is that accomplishing?

- Bill 1076 also places an extreme amount of unchecked power within the Mental Health Profession. Mental Health professionals would be charged with ensuring the public safety by opining whether someone is mentally able to own a gun. Should they be wrong and say yes and something happen, they will be exposed to potential civil suit. With that in mind, I am sure that mental health professionals will err on the side of conservatism and give many false negatives. This will also discourage those in need of mental health help from seeking such help for fear of being branded: an unintended consequence I am sure.

No one can deny the deplorable acts of a madman in Newtown during the recent December morn, but the solution is not with the automobile, but the person driving the wheel. If you truly want to make a difference, you are missing the root cause. No matter how hard we try, we cannot legislate morality. Instead, we need to provide the funding to adequately treat our troubled youth and mentally ill. We all need to be better parents, drop the iPhones, and spend time with our children to teach them family values, develop them, and recognize our shortfalls as humans and seek professional help when problems are beyond what we can solve within the family. More importantly, as parents, we also need to limit the amount of time a child can spend playing violent video games. We need to limit the number of hours in a week that someone can watch violent TV. We also need to legislate the number of violent movies that can be released in a year. We need to prohibit sellers like Amazon.com from plastering advertisements for violent video games such as the Call of Duty on every outgoing package, and we need to limit free speech that promotes violence. But the latter points would violate the First Amendment and would be wrong.

Gun owners are not evil people; we are average people with a strong patriotic heritage. We are businessmen, parents, and ordinary people just like you. But this proposed legislation really doesn't tackle the problem. We can take the easy way out and blame this on guns and take away the rights of legal owners. We can demonize gun owners, make them all seem like redneck gun-toting cowboys, but are we really doing anything to solve the problem and protect our children when we do this? I say no.

Our founding Fathers introduced the Second Amendment to ensure that a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed. The Second Amendment is as important to our survival as a free nation as the First Amendment. Rather than provide the various Supreme Court interpretations of the Second Amendment, I would like to simply remind everyone that the underlying purpose so ever lives: to ensure that its citizens have the capabilities to stand up against oppressive governments, no matter how remote of a probability that may seem. If anyone has any doubt, I ask you to pull up your history book or take a few minutes to watch one of the many documentaries of the Third Reich on the History Channel or to look at Syria or North Korea. The United States' own National Intelligence Council last year

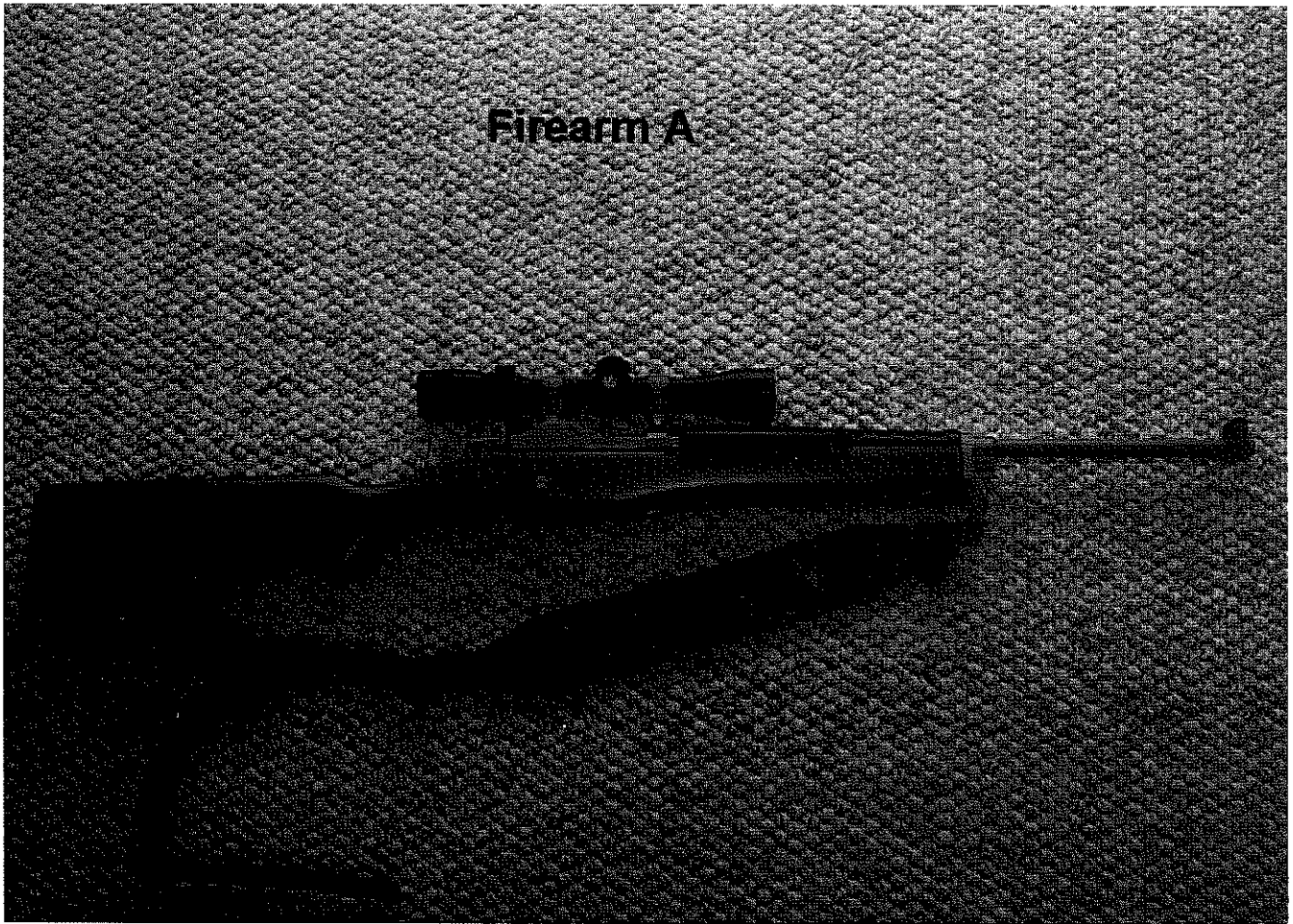
admitted that the U.S. will cease to be a world power within the next 17 years ceding the role socially, economically and militarily to China and possibly India and Brazil, as well. Our world is changing around us and is becoming a more dangerous place.

The Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety was tasked with creating a safer Connecticut. I question The Public Safety and Security Committee motives for preempting that task force by introducing these proposed bills.

I ask our elected officials to not take the easy way out and hide behind the acts of a madman. Let's acknowledge the fact we have to better enforce the laws we have; that we have a failed mental health care system; and, we, as parents, need to do a better job parenting- myself included. Except for the proposed legislation on Straw-Man Purchases, the requirement for a completion of a national background check in order to purchase a firearm, stricter mental health look-back periods, the reconstitution of the Firearms Examiners Board, and the requirement of an eligibility certificate, pistol permit, or Connecticut hunting license to purchase ammunition noted in the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety's Republican Consensus Proposal, I haven't seen a single piece of proposed legislation that will stop or deter gun violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak against these proposals.

Firearm A



Firearm B

